



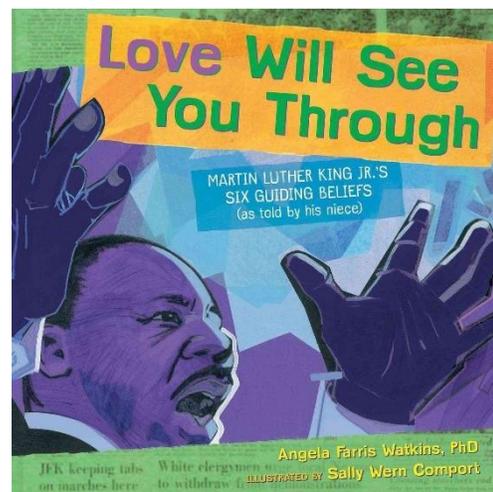
Making History Come Alive: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Making History Come Alive

As we approach Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 18, we are reminded that we still have people with us who lived through the Civil Rights Movement – they are a resource! We encourage you to connect adults who lived through the Civil Rights Movement with today's youth in order to provide context and "eye witness" accounts of what day-to-day life was like during this turbulent yet triumphant era.

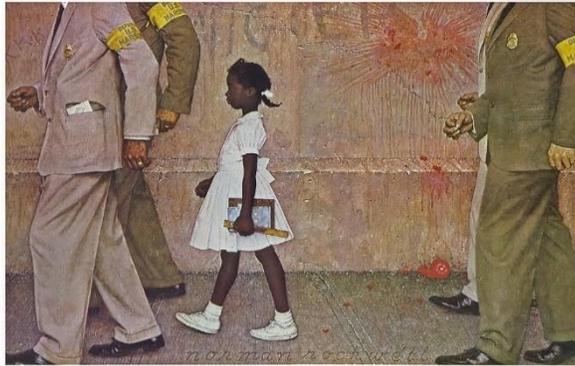
If you'd like help with where to find older adults or youth and suggested activities for when you are together, check out the *Steps to Create an Intergenerational Program in your Community* handout on the Bridges Together website. (BridgesTogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/BT_IG_Steps-1.pdf)

The story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is so rich and complex that it can be hard to know where to start. We have found the book *Love Will See You Through: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Six Guiding Beliefs (as told by his niece)* to be a wonderful resource. Written by Angela Farris Watkins, PhD and illustrated by Sally Wern Comport, *Love Will See You Through* highlights the values Dr. King held dear and provides examples of how he lived these beliefs.



To further explore themes of justice and social action, consider relating Martin Luther King, Jr.'s story to the stories of two other people who taught nonviolence by example. In 1960, Ruby Bridges was a six-year-old girl and the first black child to attend an all-white elementary school in Louisiana. Several years after counseling the Bridges family and writing *Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear* about this experience, child psychiatrist Robert Coles authored a popular picture book depicting Ruby's first year of school. *The Story of Ruby Bridges* gives children an introduction to Ruby's life, including how she had to be protected by federal marshals due to angry crowds of protestors. Children also learn how Ruby prayed for the people in the angry crowds, despite their cruelty. Another leader who practiced nonviolence to effect change was Mahatma Gandhi. *Grandfather Gandhi* by Arun Gandhi, the grandson of the leader of the Indian-independence movement, tells how his grandfather taught him about peace and nonviolence.

Discussing the impact of Martin Luther King, Jr, Ruby Bridges and Mahatma Gandhi not only enriches a discussion about why we celebrate Dr. King, but it also gives us examples of how people of all different ages can make a difference! These two books give a nice background for discussion of peaceful protest that lead to change. You can also use this picture by Norman Rockwell to begin a discussion.



The Problem We All Live With, Norman Rockwell, 1964

The Six Guiding Beliefs of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. **Have Courage.**
2. **Love your Enemies.**
3. **Fight the problem not the person who caused it.**
4. **When innocent people are hurt others are inspired to help.**
5. **Resist violence of any kind.**
6. **The universe honors love.**

Here are some examples of how we can practice these beliefs in our own lives using the theory of Multiple Intelligences:

People Smart



- Invite someone who lived during the time of segregation to speak to the class about what life was like then.
- Have a conversation about how we can use Dr. King's six guiding beliefs in our lives.
- Make your group more diverse by inviting people from other churches, schools and senior centers. Having people from different groups within your community will make your conversations richer. (See our sheet entitled to Steps to Create an Intergenerational Program in Your Community.)

Self Smart



- Encourage people to share about times in their lives when they have shown courage.
- Share examples of those they admire and how they showed courage in their lives.
- Make a list of your six guiding beliefs.

Nature Smart



- Plant a peace garden to celebrate Dr. King's message of peace and love.
- Plan a meditative nature walk. Map out a walk with different places along the way to enjoy nature and reflect on Dr. King's belief that the universe honors love.

Word Smart



- Create a newsletter with ideas of how we can use Dr. King's beliefs in our own lives. Examples could include dealing with issues of bullying and using nonviolence to solve problems.
- Create signs with messages of peace and love of others.
- Read *My Grandfather Gandhi* and talk about how Gandhi used the six guiding beliefs of Martin Luther King, Jr. in his life.
- Read the *The Story of Ruby Bridges* and talk about how Ruby used the six guiding beliefs in her life.

Body Smart



- Create a dance that acts out peace or nonviolent resolution.
- Perform skits using nonviolence to resolve problems.

Logic Smart



- In small groups, make a list of key events in history that were solved in a nonviolent manner.
- Make a list of practical applications of Dr. King's beliefs that you can utilize in your own life.

Music Smart



- Write a song about peace.
- Make a list of songs from the Civil Rights Movement.
- Find songs about peace.

Picture Smart



- Create paintings with messages of peace and nonviolence.
- Make a mural showing an example of one of Dr. King's beliefs.
- Make a picture book of Dr. King's life to share with the group.
- Talk about Norman Rockwell's painting of Ruby Bridges.